

A G.I.R.L. Journey

Every Month Should Be Volunteer Appreciation Month

vol·un·teer

verb

1. freely offer to do something.
"he volunteered for the job"

Well that doesn't do it justice.

It is said, to be a Girl Scout volunteer is to be a change maker. Yes, that's more like it. A Girl Scout volunteer has the power to change lives. To change the shy, withdrawn child cocooned in her lack of confidence into the girl who is unafraid to stand up and speak her truth. A Girl Scout volunteer is a powerful, lasting influencer who opens the doors of possibility for girls who will make the world a better place. A Girl Scout volunteer helps girls discover the world around them and the spark within them. And odds are many of you wield this power unaware of the lasting impressions you will leave, the memories you will weave, or the lifelong gratitude the girls will hold in their hearts for you, forever.

Take it from Autumn Cohen who penned the following words and spoke them at her beloved Girl Scout leader's funeral this past winter:

"Molly devoted her life to Girl Scouts. She had many troops over many years and brought her passion and devotion as a leader to all of them. Mine was Troop 209 and even sharing that feels special, this magical part of my childhood that was mine, made sacred by the values and lessons that Molly brought to it. Starting when we were young, Molly opened her home to us and gathered us together for meetings that, at their core, were about relationship building, respect, leadership and preparing for our future selves, all while honoring who we were in that moment. She expanded our worlds, taking us on many adventures both near and far. She was this constant presence in our lives, offering more and more so we could grow and grow, strengthening our roots while giving us wings and knowing we could soar.

"To be honest, I don't remember many of the badges that I earned in Girl Scouts. Which isn't to say that we didn't work hard for them - we did - but what I realize now is that the hard work was the reward, not the badge itself. Molly never emphasized what we earned, instead she gave us the process, the experience, and the immense dedication of her time, patience and joy for life. So, in retrospect, I realize that this was really what she was

working on with us: badges of dignity, respect, compassion, fortitude and friendship, and those I remember very well and carry with me daily.

“As an adult and a mother, I have a whole new perspective on what I gained from Girl Scouts and from Molly. It’s almost hard to separate it from the girl who went through those experiences - to see one without the other. I remember the dinners at her house and then sitting and laughing with friends in her living room. I remember bike trips and overnights at Smith College, cookie sales and playing on the beach.

“Molly was there to be a leader to girls, to give of herself in order to help us to grow stronger. She was patient and kind to us, always. She never coddled, never talked down, never treated us like we were anything but capable. She was an absolute gift to us and we were so lucky, so very lucky, that we had her in our lives. I can only hope and wish that my own children will have someone who believes in them the way that Molly believed in me.

“One particularly fond memory to share is that of our ceremony crossing over from Brownie Girl Scouts to Junior Girl Scouts. I was young, but remember a bridge of stepping stones that Molly set up for us in our school cafeteria. I can imagine myself now, walking over it, stone by stone, feeling the change inside me as I became something bigger than I had been, and knowing it was a special moment in my life. I think now of Molly as she crosses over into her next place, and I know that she carries with her the many, many girls and women **who she changed**, helped to grow, who she truly empowered. And as we all continue to walk over our stepping stones in life, we will carry our Girl Scout leader Molly with us, stronger in step and fuller in our hearts because of her.”

Autumn Cohen is an eastern Massachusetts resident, a mom of 3 and forever a Girl Scout at heart, thanks to Molly.

Molly Robinson led a succession of Girl Scout troops in western Massachusetts empowering a multitude of girls from first grade through high school.

If you have a story to share about your Girl Scout leader, or about being a Girl Scout leader, I’d love to hear it. Reach out to me at info@gscwm.org.

Pattie Hallberg, CEO
Girl Scouts of Central and Western Massachusetts



Members of Troop 209 gathered with their beloved Girl Scout leader a couple of years ago and presented Molly with a book of updates and photos from every member of their troop.



Troop 209 on one of their Girl Scout troop trips to St. John, Virgin Islands